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## **Maritime social partners request the European Commission to follow up on prompt and predictable disembarkation of rescued people in distress at sea**

*ECESA, the ETF, the ICS and the ITF addressed a joint letter to Commission President Von der Leyen, Vice President Schinas, Commissioner Johansson and Commissioner Vălean reiterating their call for the European Commission to follow up on the promise to ensure prompt and predictable disembarkation of people in distress at sea rescued by merchant vessels and their crews.*

The maritime social partners first reached out to the European Commission after the latter published the Migration Pact earlier in September, without mentioning this support that merchant vessels and crews have been asking for. The publication of the Migration Pact followed just a few days after the longest stand-off experienced by a merchant vessel - the Maersk Etienne - that had rescued persons in distress.

Swiftly following the maritime social partners' call, the cabinet of Commissioner for Home Affairs Ylva Johansson met with representatives of ECESA and the ETF, and gave reassurance that the Commission understood their concern and need for clear public support and that it would explore all options to make clear its support and recommend Member State action.

*"We find it important to highlight that when merchant vessels rescue persons in distress they are doing so to meet humanitarian obligations and in fulfilment of their obligations at international law. It is of utmost importance that they are, thus, reassured that States are also fulfilling their responsibilities under international law and cooperate to ensure that merchant vessels are ensured safe, prompt and predictable disembarkation,"* wrote the maritime social partners in their recent joint letter.

While the social partners welcome the reassurances of support, they consider the Migration Pact insufficient to deal with the concerns of the merchant fleet and their crews.

Therefore, the four organisations are requesting remedial action by the Commission to show its public support.

*"Complementing the Pact is urgently needed. The Commission's sustained encouragement to all Member States to fulfil their international obligations and to cooperate and coordinate efforts in a solidary/burden sharing approach is needed to ensure merchant fleet and their crews are guaranteed safe, prompt and predictable disembarkations when they rescue persons in distress at sea,"* added the social partners in the letter.

ECSA, the ETF, the ICS and the ITF consider this an urgent matter and remain ready to work with the Commission on this issue.

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